

I might remind the gentleman that we passed the welfare reform I think 2 years ago and never got through the Senate and sat on the desk, and it never was considered by the Senate. That bill, by the way, has had more than 20 hearings and multiple mark-ups, and we feel that Members have had plenty of opportunity to consider the bill. We want to expedite the process and not jeopardize the great success that we have seen over the time of the welfare reform.

As far as the Committee on Rules is concerned, if the gentleman will continue to yield, it will go straight to the Committee on Rules discharging from the committees. The chairman is standing right beside me. I would anticipate very soon that he will announce a filing deadline for amendments this evening and will meet sometime next week to consider those amendments.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the leader for that information with reference to how it is going to be considered.

As the gentleman, as the leader will recall, and I am sure the chairman of the Committee on Rules will recall, when last considered, the Democrats, the minority, was given a substitute, and a waiver was given with respect to that substitute as well. We would hope that that would be repeated again this year.

Again, notwithstanding the accelerated consideration, clearly we would hope that we would be able to offer, with an appropriate waiver, an alternative to the proposal that emanates from the Committee on Rules.

Could the leader tell me whether that is the intention?

Mr. DELAY. If the gentleman will yield further, Mr. Speaker, I have watched the chairman of the Committee on Rules work for many years now, going on 9 years as chairman of the Committee on Rules, I believe. The whole time that he has been chairman he has, I think, treated the minority with utmost and extreme fairness.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time just briefly, Mr. Leader, we do not have time to debate that issue; but I will yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. DELAY. I think that he is ultimately fair and will treat the minority fairly as it comes to the welfare reform bill.

To be serious about it, I think the minority deserves to be heard on welfare reform, especially welfare reform, and the chairman will treat them fairly.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, the last time this bill was considered the chairman will recall a waiver was given because of the budget objections that might lie.

Would the chairman contemplate a similar waiver being offered?

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. I thank the gentleman for yielding, Mr. Speaker, and appreciate the kind remarks from the distinguished majority leader.

I just want to say that I am prepared, when this colloquy comes to an end, to make an announcement that we are going to be considering this. What I will tell the gentleman is that, while we cannot at this juncture anticipate exactly what the structure of the rule will be, we clearly do plan to offer the opportunity for Members to submit their amendments. I will say right now, as I will in the announcement, the formal announcement that I will make in a couple of minutes, that we will really have a preference for amendments in the nature of a substitute, which is what we have traditionally done on the issue of welfare reform.

Until our committee works its will on this issue it would be early to say, but as the majority leader has said, we clearly want to ensure that the minority has an opportunity to be heard on this question.

I am hoping very much that we will have strong bipartisan support at the end of the day for what will be truly an historic welfare reform measure that will do exactly what the leader has said; that is, to take advantage and encourage people to get into the work force and create a modicum of responsibility, which is what this is all about.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, as some know, I was one of those who voted for the welfare reform bill.

Mr. DREIER. I know the gentleman did.

Mr. HOYER. I believe that we have made great strides. I believe that there are, obviously, different times that confront us at this point in time; but I think, given where we are, that both sides may still be pretty much in the same position they were in last time.

I would, without asking further questions, urge my friends on the majority side to provide for that full and open debate and not allow a technicality which would result from a lack of waiver to preclude a substantive alternative to be debated on this floor and the different perspectives that Members might have being aired.

I think that is good for the American public, I think it is good for the House of Representatives, and I think it is good for the final product. I would hope that would be done. We certainly anticipated the gentleman's announcement, and we will be offering a substitute in a timely fashion on Tuesday next, as I understand the chairman will announce.

Mr. DREIER. By 5 p.m., Mr. Speaker.

Mr. HOYER. I do not want to announce it for the gentleman, but I appreciate it. I appreciate the comments of the leader and the chairman of the Committee on Rules.

ADJOURNMENT TO FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2003; AND ADJOURNMENT FROM FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2003 TO TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2003

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. on Friday, February 7; and, further, that when the House adjourns on Friday, February 7, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11, for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

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DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR H.R. 4, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, WORK, AND FAMILY PROMOTION ACT OF 2003

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet the week of February 10, although I think it is pretty obvious that we are anticipating our meeting in the week of February 10, to grant a rule which could limit the amendment process for floor consideration of H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility, Work and Family Promotion Act of 2003.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment to the Committee on Rules in room H-312 of the Capitol by, as I said earlier, 5 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11.

Members should draft their amendments to the bill as it was introduced on February 4. Members should be aware that the Committee on Rules intends, as I said earlier, to give priority to amendments offered as complete substitutes.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are properly drafted and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain that their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

SALUTE TO ROBERT L. WALKER

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1